



NEWS

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Remodeler pleads guilty to felony theft of sales tax

Tacoma, Wash., Feb. 15, 2005—The operator of a defunct Fife-based remodeling business pled guilty this week to five felony counts of theft of sales tax and agreed to make \$294,254 in restitution to the state of Washington.

Robert C. Dingman, 58, of Gig Harbor entered the guilty pleas in Pierce County Superior Court on Monday. Judge Bruce W. Cohoe set sentencing for March 24. Each charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine.

The Financial Crimes Unit of the State Attorney General's Office brought the charges in March 2003 at the request of the Washington State Department of Revenue.

Dingman was president of D&D Contractors, Inc., which did business as Quality Home Enclosures. The business installed sunrooms, patio rooms and deck enclosures.

The investigation began after the company failed to file state excise tax returns in 2000 and early 2001 despite evidence that it was doing business and collecting sales taxes on its contracts.

According to the charging papers, Dingman habitually paid personal expenses out of company bank accounts and disguised these disbursements as business expenses. He also used company funds to purchase vehicles, a residence, personal watercraft and improvements to another boat.

The business closed in late 2001 amid numerous consumer complaints over failure to perform, prompting the Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney's Office to charge Dingman with theft by deception and money laundering in a separate case. The trial on those charges is scheduled to begin March 28.

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